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SUCCESS STORY

Kabul AgFair Sparks World's Appetite

50,000 attendees celebrate Afghanistan's bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables.



Photo: USAID/ASAP

Acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Saleem Khan Kunduzi and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry visit the booth of a woman selling traditional clothes at the AgFair.



Photo: USAID/Julie Fossler

An AgFair attendee inspects a display of Afghanistan's fresh produce.

"Afghanistan has sparked the interest and the appetite – literally the appetite – of the world," said U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry on the opening day of the USAID-supported Kabul International Fresh Fruit and Vegetable AgFair. The AgFair, held from May 20-22, attracted an estimated 50,000 people to forge business deals and celebrate Afghanistan's abundance of fresh produce ranging from pomegranates to spinach.

Acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Saleem Khan Kunduzi; USAID Mission Director William Frej; and other international and Afghan officials joined Ambassador Eikenberry in launching the fair at Badam Bagh Farm in Kabul. The VIPs toured the fairgrounds and interviewed several representatives of the more than 180 international and national businesses, ranging from honey producers to machinery providers.

The fair facilitated business-to-business meetings between leading agribusiness representatives from Afghanistan, India, China, Kuwait, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Following the meetings, a representative of Case-New Holland, a leading manufacturer of agricultural and construction equipment, said the company plans to select an Afghan entrepreneur to sell its machinery in the country.

"On a scale of one through ten, this fair was an eleven," said Mansoor Risvi, a business manager from Case-New Holland. "I have traveled to many countries and attended many seminars in my life, but this fair really stands out."

The AgFair also hosted a productivity center, which provided 3,000 Afghan farmers, students and government staff insight into improved agricultural methods ranging from grape trellising and soil testing to cashmere harvesting and drip irrigation.

The AgFair was the tenth such agricultural trade event held in Afghanistan. Considered by many to be the most important trade and agricultural events in Afghanistan, AgFairs have generated millions of dollars in business deals and have raised the profile of Afghanistan's agriculture sector to the global level. The AgFairs are organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA), and the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA), and are supported by USAID.